

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 EUR-25 ACDA-19

AF-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 OMB-01

AID-20 DPW-01 DRC-01 /181 W
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R 161409Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0569

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN 6568

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USINT CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I I A L TEL AVIV 9300

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, IS

SUBJECT: SIGNS OF SOME FLEXIBILITY IN ISRAELI PUBLIC ATTITUDES
TOWARD MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT

1. AS GOI DEDICATES MOST OF ITS ATTENTION TO IMPLEMENTATION OF ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT AND CABINET REPORTEDLY BEGINS TO ADDRESS ITSELF TO PREPARATIONS FOR PEACE CONFERENCE, POLITICIANS AND COMMENTATORS INCREASINGLY ARE EXPRESSING IN DIFFERENT WAYS THEIR CONVICTION THAT ISRAEL MUST BE IMAGINATIVE AND FLEXIBLE IN NEGOTIATIONS WHICH LIE AHEAD. THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT ABILITY OF EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELI GENERALS NOV 14 TO REACH COMPROMISE AND AGREEMENT -- AND FAIRLY MAJOR ONE FROM ISRAELI VIEWPOINT -- HAS HAD GREAT IMPACT ON MOOD HERE AND HAS CREATED SOME GUARDED OPTIMISM FOR FIRST TIME SINCE WAR THAT PEACE WITH EGYPT MAY BE POSSIBLE. HOWEVER, ATTITUDES OF ISRAELI PUBLIC REMAIN VOLATILE, SUBJECT TO EXTREME FLUCTUATIONS IN RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS, AND SUCH SIGNS OF FLEXIBILITY AS THERE ARE
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MUST BE REGARDED AS FRAGILE AND POTENTIALLY PERISHABLE. WE WOULD

ALSO CAUTION THAT STARTING POINT FOR CURRENT FLEXIBLE MOOD WAS GENERAL ATTITUDE IN ISRAEL AT WAR'S END THAT ISRAEL SHOULD NOT SURRENDER ONE INCH OF TERRITORY TAKEN IN 1967 (TEL AVIV ;8878). ON THOSE FEW OCCASIONS IN OUR CURRENT CONVERSATIONS AND IN MEDIA WHERE ISRAELIS ADDRESS SPECIFICS OF POSSIBLE TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS (SOMETHING MOST ISRAELIS ARE AVOIDING), THEY GENERALLY CALL FOR ISRAELI RETENTION OF AMOUNTS OF ARAB TERRITORY WHICH ARE MORE THAN "INSUBSTANTIAL."

2. MOST OUTSPOKEN PROPONENT OF NECESSITY TO CONFRONT POSTWAR SITUATION REALISTICALLY AND WITH FRESH THINKING IS DAYAN. IN NUMBER OF RECENT PUBLIC APPEARANCES HE HAS HARKED ON THEME THAT ISRAEL'S INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL POSITION HAS CHANGED DRAMATICALLY AS RESULT OF RECENT WAR, THAT ISRAEL WILL NOT BE ABLE TO CONTROL PACE OF UPCOMING EVENTS INCLUDING NEGOTIATIONS, AND THAT GOI MUST RECONSIDER ALL ITS POSITIONS IN LIGHT OF NEW REALITY. IN HIS THINKING AS HE HAS BEEN OUTLINING IT PUBLICLY, NEED TO PRESERVE GOOD RELATIONS WITH US AND TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT US INTEREST NOT TO RETURN TO DEADLOCKED SITUATION AFTER SIX DAY WAR LEADS TO CONCLUSION THAT ISRAEL MUST GET READY FOR TALKS LEADING TO OVERALL SETTLEMENT. IN COMMENTING UPON FIRST POW EXCHANGE NOV 15, DAYAN STRESSED CONSTRUCTIVE SIGNIFICANCE OF EVENT BY DECLARING THAT ISRAEL HAD AT LONG LAST ARRIVED AT STAGE WHERE ISRAEL AND THE ARABS WERE SETTTLING PROBLEMS THE WAY HUMAN BEINGS SHOULD-- BY NEGOTIATIONS.

3. BROAD RANGE OF ISRAELI PARLIAMENTARIANS HAS STREYFED NEED FOR CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH TO NEGOTIATIONS PHASE. ON TV PANEL PROGRAM NOV 14, FIVE KNESSET MEMBERS INCLUDING OPPOSITION LEADER SHMUEL TAMIR AGREED THAT: A) ISRAEL MUST GIVE PRIORITY TO PRESERVING GOOD US-GOI RELATIONS; B) ISRAEL SHOULD ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS WITH EGYPT ALONE IN FIRST STAGE; C) ISRAEL-EGYPT SETTLEMENT SHOULD INVOLVE ISRAELI TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS IN EXCHANGE FOR EGYPTIAN POLITICAL CONCESSIONS (WHICH TYE DID NOT SPECIFY); AND D) ISRAELI TERRITORIAL WITHDRAWAL SHOULD BE BY STAGES SPACED OUT OVER NUMBER OF YEARS.

4. TWO PUBLIC FIGURES IDENTIFIED WITH LIKUD, EICHMAN TRIAL JUDGE AND KNESSET MEMBER BENJAMIN HALEVI AND GENERAL (RET) EZER WEIZMAN, THIS WEEK HAVE OPENLY CRITICIZED LIKUD'S CONFIDENTIAL

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OBJECTION TO OCT 22 CEASEFIRE AND TO SIX POINT AGREEMENT AS DETRIMENTAL TO PEACE PROSPECTS.

5. NUMBER OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES BY ACADMICIANS AND POLITICAL COMMENTATORS ALSO EXHORT GOI TO APPROACH NEGOTIATIONS PHASE BY RE-EXAMINING OLD IDEAS AND ABANDONING POST 1967 IMMOBILISM. ARAB AFFAIRS EXPERT SHIMON SHAMIR OF TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY'S SHILOAH INSTITUTE HAS WRITTEN, IN HAARETZ SERIES, THAT ISRAELIS

MUST TAKE FRESH LOOK AT SADAT'S POLITICAL OBJECTIVES AND AT THEIR OWN VIEWS OF ARAB MENTALITY, AND THAT HAWKS AND DOVES ALIKE MUST REASSESS THEIR VIEWS. ANOTHER COMMENTATOR HAS ARGUED THAT ISRAELIS TODAY CAN BE DIVIDED INTO REALISTS READY FOR NEGOTIATIONS AND THOSE WHO SEEM TO LIVE OSTRICH-LIKE IN WORLD IN WHICH NOTHING HAS CHANGED. ISRAELIS, HE CONCLUDES, MUST NOW PRESENT THEIR OWN "REASONABLE DEMANDS AND PROPOSALS" RATHER THAN ONLY REACT TO PLANS OFFERED BY OTHERS. ON MORE CONCRETE LEVEL, RE-EXAMINATION OF STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE OF SHARM EL-SHEIKH CONTINUES TO GET CONSIDERABLE PRESS ATTENTION.

6. IN SUM, AMIDST CONTINUING ANXIETIES ABOUT US INTENTIONS AND DEEP SUSPICIONS ABOUT SOVIET AND ARAB OBJECTIVES, MANY ISRAELIS FOR TIME BEING ARE CONGNIZANT OF NEED FOR FLEXIBILITY AND REALISM. WHETHER THESE VOICES WILL ALSO PREVAIL AMONG GOI'S DECISION MAKERS REMAINS TO BE SEEN; AS WE HAVE NOTED ALREADY, MUCH DEPENDS IN COMING DAYS ON HOW SIX POINT AGREEMENT IS IMPLEMENTED BY EGYPT, WITH FOCUS AT THIS MOMENT ON TRANSIT THROUGH BAB-EL-MANDEB.
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